THE OBSERVER.

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ON HAPPINESS,

BY THE REV. LAWRENCE STERNE, A. M.

The great pursuit of man is after happiness; it is the first and strongest desire of his nature;---in every stage of his life he searches for it as for hidden treasure;--- courts it under a thousand different shapes;---and, though perpetually disappointed,---still persists---runs after and enquires for it afresh---asks every passenger who comes in his way, "Who will show him any good?"---who will assist him in the attainment of it, or direct him to the discovery of this great end of all his wishes?

He is told by one, to search for it among the more gay and youthful pleasures of life; in scenes of mirth and sprightliness, where happiness ever presides, and is ever to be known by the joy and laughter which he will see at once painted in her looks.

A second, with a graver aspect, points out to him the costly dwellings which pride and extravagance have erected:---tells the enquirer that the object he is in search of inhabits there;---that happiness lives only in company of the great, in the midst of much pomp and outward state;---that he will easily find her out by the coat of many colours she has on, and the great luxury and expence of equipage and furniture with which she always sits surrounded.

The miser wonders how any one would mislead and wilfully put him upon so wrong a scent---convinces him that happiness and extravagance never inhabited under the same roof;---that if he would not be disappointed in his search, he must look into the plain and thrifty dwelling of the prudent man, who knows and understands the worth of money, and cautiously lays it up against an evil hour: that it is not the prostitution of wealth upon the passions, or the parting with it at all that constitutes happiness---but that it is the keeping it together, and the *having* and *holding* it fast to him and his heirs for ever, which are the chief attributes that form this great idol of human worship, to which so much incense is offered up every day.

The epicure, though he easily rectifies so gross a mistake, yet, at

the same time, he plunges him, if possible, into a greater; for, hearing the object of his pursuit to be happiness, and knowing of no other happiness than what is seated immediately in the senses---he sends the enquirer there;---tells him 'tis in vain to search elsewhere for it, than where nature herself has placed it--- in the indulgence and gratification of the appetites, which are given us for that end: and, in a word---if he will not take his opinion in the matter--- he may trust the word of a much wiser man, who has assured us---that there is nothing better in this world, than that a man should eat and drink, and rejoice in his works, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour---for that is his portion.

To rescue him from this brutal experiment---ambition takes him by the hand and carries him into the world,---shows him all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them,---points out the many ways of advancing his fortune and raising himself to honour,---lays before his eyes all the charms and bewitching temptations of power, and asks if there can be any happiness in this world like that of being caressed, courted, flattered, and followed?

To close all, the philosopher meets him bustling in the full career of this pursuit---stops him---tells him, if he is in search of happiness, he is far gone out of his way:---that this deity has been long banished from noise and tumults, where there was no rest found for her, and was fled into solitude far from all commerce of the world; and, in a word, if he would find her, he must leave this busy and intriguing scene, and go back to that peaceful scene of retirement and books from which he first set out.

In this circle, too often does man run, tries all experiments, and generally sits down wearied and dissatisfied with them all at last---in utter despair of ever accomplishing what he wants---nor knowing what to trust to after so many disappointments---or where to lay the fault, whether in the incapacity of his own nature, or the insufficiency of the enjoyments themselves.

In this uncertain and perplexed state---without knowledge which way to turn or where to betake ourselves for refuge---so often abused and deceived by the many who pretend thus to show us any good---Lord! says the Psalmist, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Send us some rays of thy grace and heavenly wisdom, in this benighted search after happiness, to direct us safely to it. O God! let us not wander for ever without a guide, in this dark region, in endless pursuit of our mistaken good; but enlighten our eyes that we sleep not in death---open to them the comforts of thy holy word and religion---lift up the light of thy countenance upon us,---and make us know the joy and satisfaction of living in the true faith and fear of Thee, which only can carry us to this haven of rest where we would be---that sure haven, where true joys are to be found, which will at length not only answer all our expectations---but satisfy the most unbounded of our wishes for ever and ever.

There is hardly any subject more exhausted, or which at one time or other has afforded more matter for argument and declamation, than this, of the insufficiency of our enjoyments. Scarcely a reformed sensualist, from Solomon down to our days, who has not, in some fits of repentance or disappointment, uttered some sharp reflection on the emptiness of human pleasure, and the vanity of vanities which discovers itself in all the pursuits of mortal man.---But the mischief has been, that, though so many good things have been said, they have generally had the fate to be considered, either as the overflowings of

disgust from sated appetites which could no longer relish the pleasures of life, or as the declamatory opinions of recluse and splenetic men, who had never tasted them at all, and, consequently, were thought no judges of the matter. So that it is no great wonder, if the greatest part of such reflections, however just in themselves, and founded on truth and a knowledge of the world, are found to leave little impression where the imagination was already heated with great expectations of future happiness; and that the best lectures that have been read upon the vanity of the world, so seldom stop a man in the pursuit of the object of his desire, or give him half the conviction that the possession of it will, and what the experience of his own life, or a careful observation upon the life of others, does at length generally confirm to us all.

I would not be understood as if I were denying the reality of pleasures, or disputing the being of them, any more than one would the reality of pain---yet I must observe, that there is a plain distinction to be made betwixt pleasure and happiness. For though there can be no happiness without pleasure---yet the reverse of the proposition will not hold true.---We are so made, that, from the common gratifications of our appetites, and the impression of a thousand objects, we snatch the one like a transient gleam, without being suffered to taste the other and enjoy the perpetual sunshine and fair weather which constantly attend it. This, I contend, is only to be found in religion---in the consciousness of virtue---and the sure and certain hopes of a better life, which brightens all our prospects, and leaves no room to dread disappointments---because the expectations of it are built upon a rock whose foundations are as deep as those of heaven and hell.

And though, in our pilgrimage through this world---some of us may be so fortunate as to meet with some clear fountains by the way, that may cool, for a few moments, the heat of this great thirst of happiness---yet our Savior, who knew the world, though he enjoyed but little of it, tells us, that whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:---and we all find by experience it is so, and by reason that it always must be so.

I conclude with a short observation upon Solomon's evidence in this case.

Never did the busy brain of a lean and hectic chymist search for the philosopher's stone with more pains and ardour than this great man did after happiness. He was one of the wisest enquirers into nature---had tried all her powers and capacities; and after a thousand vain speculations, and vile experiments, he affirmed at length, that it lay hid in no one thing he had tried; like the chymist's projections, all had ended in smoke, or, what was worse, in vanity and vexation of spirit.---The conclusion of the whole matter was this---that he advises every man that would be happy, to fear God and keep his commandments.

"Sermons."

ON RELIGION, LIFE, AND FUTURITY,

BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH, M. B.

The religion of the Dauries is more absurd than even that of the sectaries of Fohi; they adore a wicked divinity; they fear him and worship him; they imagine him a malicious being, ready to injure and ready to be appeased. The men and women assemble at midnight in a hut, which serves them for a temple; a priest stretches himself upon the ground, and all the poor people pour forth the most

horrid cries, while drums and timbrels swell the infernal concert. After this dissonance, miscalled music, has continued about two hours, the priest rises from the ground, assumes an air of inspiration, grows big with the inspiring demon, and pretends to a skill in futurity. They keep their dead three days upon the same bed where the person died; after which they bury him in a grave moderately deep, but with the head uncovered. Here for several days they present him with different sorts of meat, which when they perceive he does not consume, they fill up the grave. These are their most serious and religious occupations. Where is human reason? Not only some men, but whole nations seem divested of its illuminations. Are these men rational? or, are not the apes of Burneo more wise? Without philosophers, without some virtuous men, who seem to be of a different nature from the rest of mankind; without such as these the worship of a wicked divinity would surely be established over every part of the earth. Fear guides more to their duty than gratitude: for one man who is virtuous from the love of virtue, from the obligation which he thinks he lies under to the Giver of all, there are thousands who are good only from their apprehensions of punishment.

How am I surprized at the inconsistency of the Magi! their two principles of good and evil affright me. The Indian, who bathes his visage in urine, and calls it piety, strikes me with astonishment. The Christian, who prays to saints and angels is highly absurd. The Jews who pretend that Deity is pleased with effusion of blood, are not less displeasing. I am equally surprized that rational beings can come from the extremities of the earth, in order to kiss a stone, or scatter pebbles. How contrary to reason are these! and yet all pretend to teach me to be happy.

Surely all men are blind and ignorant of truth. Mankind wander, unknowing their way, from morning till the evening. Where shall we turn after happiness? or, is it wisest to desist from the pursuit? Like reptiles in the corner of some stupendous palace, we peep from our holes, look about us, wonder at all we see, but are ignorant of the Great Architect's design. O for a revelation of himself, for a plan of his universal system! O for the reason of our creation; or why we were created to be thus unhappy! If we are to experience no other felicity but what this life affords; then are we miserable indeed! If we are born only to look about us, repine and die, then has heaven been guilty of injustice. If this life terminate my existence, I despise the blessings of providence, and the wisdom of the giver.

If this life be my all, let the following epitaph be written upon my tomb.

"By my father's crime, I received this: by my own crimes I bequeath it to posterity!"

"Citizen of the World."

HAPPINESS FOUNDED IN RECTITUDE,

BY JAMES HARRIS.

All men pursue good, and would be happy, if they knew how: not happy for minutes, and miserable for hours; but happy, if possible, through every part of their existence. Either, therefore, there is a good of this steady, durable kind, or there is none. If none, then all good must be transient and uncertain; and if so, an object of the lowest value, which can little deserve our attention or enquiry. But if there be a better good, such a good as we are seeking; like every other thing, it must be derived from some cause; and that cause

must be either external, internal, or mixed; inasmuch as, except these three, there is no other possible. Now a steady, durable good cannot be derived from an external cause; by reason, all derived from externals must fluctuate as they fluctuate. By the same rule, not from a mixture of the two; because the part which is external will proportionably destroy its essence. What then remains but the cause internal; the very cause which we have supposed when we place the sovereign good in mind---in rectitude of conduct?

"Treatise concerning Happiness."

ADVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

A person who is interested in every thing that can be useful to humanity, is desirous of giving to the public a remedy that chance has discovered.

An officer who had a consumptive complaint in his breast, was dissolving over a chafing-dish of fire, in a very close room, an equal quantity of white pitch and yellow bees-wax, with an intention of soldering some bottles; and, after having breathed in for some time the vapor arising from it, he found the complaint in his breast greatly relieved. This observation (extremely interesting to himself) determined him to continue for some days in the same fumigation. He soon perceived a very considerable amendment, and at length was entirely cured.

This cure was very much talked of. Madame la Margrave de Baden was informed of it, and she was desirous that a trial might be made of this remedy in Dourlach's Hospital, upon a soldier whose life was despaired of; the success equalled every hope that could be conceived, and the patient was perfectly cured. In consequence of which the Princess gave orders that this fact be put in the Carlsahue Gazette of July 1771, and the 14th of the following September. The same public paper confirms this recital, adding, that this remedy has been experienced with equal efficacy upon different people who were attacked with complaints in the breast; and that very many, when even the lungs were ulcerated, and who were entirely given over, had been cured by this simple remedy.

It must be observed, that the room in which the fumigation is to be performed, ought to be very closely shut up, and that the person should walk about to suck in the vapour by degrees.

TRANSLATIONS

Of the Latin Communication in our last, beginning

Somne levis! quanquam certissma Mortis imago, &c.

O gentle *Sleep*, of Death the awful guise,
Thrice welcome to my couch to seal my eyes!
How sweet thus life, not dying, to resign!
And *dying life* with *living death* combine. M. C.

Soft Sleep! I still implore thy long wish'd aid,
And tho' Death's sister, woo thee to my bed;
For lifeless I enjoy thy magic charms,
And, without Death, how sweet! expire within thy arms. J. G.

THE SNOW-STORM.

By Dr. Trotter.

THE day had been dreary---the wind from the east;
The cold it was pinching to man and to beast,
And the clouds seem'd to labour with snow;
When William had drove all his flocks to the farm,
To shelter them well and to keep them from harm,
For the sky, dark and low'ring, threaten'd a storm,
And he thought it would bluster and blow.

"And now," said the shepherd, "my flock is all sure,
"My cow is safe hous'd, and my bleaters secure,
"Besides, 'tis the last of the week;
"And if in my cot I should loiter and stay,
"And not see my Mary---ah! what would she say,
"(For the fear of a storm never kept me away)
"She would think I was chang'd, or was sick."

Right true was his love---and his Mary's was so,
And she promis'd to marry him, not long ago,
As soon as the winter was gone:
For her father was dead, and her mother was ill,
And she knew not herself how to manage the mill;
Her sheep bleated round, and she could not but feel
It was comfortless living alone.

He whistled up Tinker, and threw round his plaid,
Nor fear'd the dark night while he sought the dear maid,
For oft had he trod the same road.
The snow, how it drifted! and loud blew the wind!
But what was the storm to a lover so kind,
Or the depth of the snow, were he able to find,
Sweet Mary, thy charming abode?

He trudged along, thinking no ill would betide;
His poor, faithful Tinker kept close by his side,
For they had no great distance to roam.
Thro' the waste and the woodland, and turning the stile,
"Why, the whole of the journey is scarcely a mile;
"Let me see but my Mary---one kiss and a smile,
"And then I'll return to my home.

"Come, Tinker, come near me, for fear you should stray;
"The snow it grows deeper---more trackless the way,
"And I wish not to leave you behind;
"If Tinker should tarry, my Mary would sigh;
"She calls you *dear fellow*, and wipes her bright eye,
"And pats on your head when she bids me good bye:
"Her heart is so tender and kind."

More fierce grew the storm, and more high the wind blew,
And the church on the hill was obscur'd from his view,
And darker than pitch grew the night;
Benumb'd with the cold, he was thinking he'd stay,
And chat with his true-love until it were day,
When the veering wind led him a little astray,
And he slipp'd and he sunk out of sight.

Poor Mary, who watch'd the approach of the storm,
And fear'd that her lover would come to some harm,

Sat list'ning to ev'ry noise.
The wind and snow drifting were all that she heard;
She wish'd he would come, yet his coming she fear'd,
When Tinker, poor Tinker, her fond bosom cheer'd,
By the sound of his known welcome voice.

Ere she open'd the door, she expected his knock;
She expected his kiss....but how great was the shock,
To find that no William was there!
With dread apprehension, poor Mary turn'd pale;
But when faithful Tinker had howl'd out his tale,
He pull'd by her gown, and, in spite of the gale,
She follow'd in wo and despair.

Not very far off, at the foot of the hill,
And down a steep rock, near the race of the mill,
The corse of her true-lover lay;
The hollow wind howl'd thro' the trees on the brow;
Her limbs were encumber'd in volumes of snow,
And Tinker he led her the way.

When breathless with fear she arriv'd at the place,
She gave one sad look at her lover's pale face,
For ever, alas! he was gone.
With a piteous shriek, she sunk down and dy'd.
Their bodies, next morning, a neighbour espy'd,
And poor, faithful Tinker lay close by their side,
As dead and as cold as a stone.

NEWS OF THE WEEK;

Extracted chiefly from "The Mercantile Advertiser."

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM SPAIN.

Captain Domingo Brito of the Spanish schooner Dolores, alias Ferdinand VIIth, arrived at Philadelphia from Laguira, touched at Porto Rico, which she left on the 9th of March—Capt. B. informs, that the day before he left Porto Rico, a Spanish Felucca had arrived in 26 days from Cadiz, which confirmed the news formerly published of the success of the Spanish arms, and of the affairs of the Patriots—that they had beaten the enemy in every action down to the date of his sailing---and this news was further confirmed by the official Gazettes which the said Felucca brought---The Captain further adds, that Gen. Massena lost an arm, and was mortally wounded in the breast, leaving on the field of battle 16,000 men in killed and wounded, and 14,000 prisoners.

Capt. B. further informs, that the Province of Caraccas remained perfectly tranquil---and that a British frigate had arrived, having on board the Governor of Curracoa, Sir Jas. Cockburn, and suit---who was received with the greatest rejoicing and enthusiasm at Laguira: from whence he proceeded to Caraccas, on a visit to the Captain General.

[A respectable gentleman, who handed the preceding statement, says, that, from his knowledge of Captain Brito, he believes it to be correct.]

Accounts from Havanna, state, the Government had refused to receive Mr. ANDERSON, in his character of American Consul.